



The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez

A2 Version

Part 1: Murder in the Study

On a stormy November night, Inspector Hopkins comes to Baker Street. He needs help with a murder. A young man called Willoughby Smith has been killed at a country house in Kent — the area south-east of London.

Smith worked as a secretary for Professor Coram, a sick old man who rarely gets out of bed. That morning, a maid heard a terrible cry. She found Smith on the floor with a deep cut in his neck. Before he died, he said: 'The professor — it was she.' In his hand he held a pair of golden pince-nez — glasses that clip onto the nose without arms over the ears.

Part 2: Holmes Reads the Clues

Holmes examines the glasses very carefully. The lenses are very thick — the owner has very poor eyesight. The nose clips are very wide apart — the owner has a broad, flat nose. One clip has been recently repaired. The frames are solid gold — the owner is well-dressed and has some money.

Holmes writes a description: a woman with a broad nose, eyes set far apart, rounded shoulders, and very poor sight. He says she can be found by contacting London's opticians — specialists who test eyesight and make glasses.

Part 3: The Cigarettes and the Bookcase

Holmes and Watson travel to Yoxley Old Place the next day. Holmes visits the professor's bedroom. The professor smokes constantly, one Egyptian cigarette after another. Holmes accepts several cigarettes and drops ash near a large bookcase.

The housekeeper tells Holmes something strange: despite the terrible events the previous day, the professor ate a very large breakfast and a good lunch. Holmes thinks he is feeding someone else.

After lunch, Holmes tips over the cigarette box. While everyone picks up the cigarettes, Holmes looks at the ash on the floor. Someone has walked through it — coming out from behind the bookcase. Holmes says he has solved the case. He points to the bookcase. It opens like a door. A woman steps out.

Part 4: The Wife's Story

The woman is the professor's wife. He is not really English. He is Russian. Many years ago, both were part of a group that wanted to change the Russian government. The professor betrayed the whole group to the police. Some were executed. Others were sent to Siberia — the cold distant region of Russia used as a place of hard punishment. She was sent there too.

One man she loved very much — a gentle man named Alexis — was also sent to Siberia, even though he never wanted violence. The professor had stolen her diary and Alexis's letters and used them against him. Alexis is still in Siberia now, working in a salt mine.

She found her husband in England. She came to get back the letters that could free Alexis. Smith walked in and grabbed her. She picked up a small knife and stabbed him to get free. She did not mean to kill him. She ran down the wrong corridor and ended up in the professor's bedroom by mistake.

She threatened her husband: help her or she would tell his enemies where he was. He hid her behind the bookcase and gave her food. Now she gives Holmes a small packet — the letters that can prove Alexis's innocence. She asks Holmes to send it to the Russian Embassy. Then she takes poison she has been hiding. Holmes tries to help her, but she dies.